

# How much progress has there been in vaccinating against Hib in the Americas?

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The bacterium *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) causes at least 3 million cases of severe disease each year, and about 400,000 children die annually due to pneumonia or meningitis caused by Hib.

Vaccines against Hib are both safe and highly effective at reducing disease and deaths from Hib infection, and so the World Health Organization recommends the introduction of Hib vaccines worldwide. In a policy paper in this week's *PLoS Medicine*, M. Carolina Danovaro-Holliday (Pan American Health Organization; PAHO) and colleagues examine the progress of Hib vaccine introduction in the Americas.

They find that by the end of 2006, all countries of the Americas, except Haiti, had included Hib in their immunization schedule. Factors that favored this region-wide Hib vaccine adoption, they say, included strong political will, data supporting a high Hib disease burden and the positive impact of Hib vaccination in early adopters, and the existence of a mechanism called the Revolving Fund for bulk purchase of vaccines. But "efforts are still needed," say the authors, "to improve vaccination coverage and to strengthen invasive bacterial disease surveillance in developing countries."

Citation: Danovaro-Holliday MC, Garcia S, de Quadros C, Tambini G, Andrus JK (2008) Progress in vaccination against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b in the Americas. *PLoS Med* 5(4): e87

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